

## MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors  
From: Carol Guthrie for Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.)  
Re: Approval of four nominations

During an Executive Session off the Senate floor this afternoon, members of the Senate Finance Committee unanimously approved (21-0) the following nominations:

- Christopher A. Padilla, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade;
- Christina H. Pearson, to be Assistant Secretary Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Benjamin Eric Sasse, to be Assistant Secretary Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and
- Charles E.F. Millard, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

Chairman Baucus inserted the following statement on nominations into the Record of a Senate Finance Committee hearing this morning:

**I want to take a moment to note that if and when we get a quorum of 11 Senators, we will interrupt to report out four nominations:**

**Christopher Padilla to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, Benjamin Sasse to be Assistant Secretary of HHS for Planning and Evaluation, Christina Pearson to be Assistant Secretary of HHS for Public Affairs, and Charles to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.**

**Mr. Padilla's nomination comes at a pivotal time in U.S. trade policy. Negotiators from the United States and the 150 other members of the World Trade Organization are trying to reach a deal by the end of the year. At the same time, the administration is pushing Congress to approve new trade agreements with Peru, Panama, Colombia, and Korea. And the administration seeks renewed fast-track authority to negotiate even more agreements.**

**But continued support for trade is dependent upon the United States enforcing the trade agreements that we already have. And support for trade is also dependent on reauthorizing and expanding Trade Adjustment Assistance to make sure that we extend a helping hand to those whom trade leaves behind. It's hard to imagine how we can move ahead on our trade agenda until we meet this critical objective.**

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The second and third nominations before us today are for the Department of Health and Human Services. HHS is the largest non-defense agency in the Federal Government. It is charged with protecting the health of all Americans. It is charged with providing essential human services, especially for the most vulnerable among us.

The first of the two HHS nominees whom we will consider is Benjamin Sasse to be Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. This person advises the Secretary of HHS on policy developments in all areas of the Departments' work.

And planning based on that information can have long-term implications. I am concerned that Federal funds are being directed toward research with political objectives, rather than scientific importance. I expect Dr. Sasse to work to craft a research agenda that is politically unbiased and scientifically relevant and accurate. Americans want to have their tax dollars directed toward research that really works to find cures for diseases. Our children and seniors deserve it.

Christina Pearson has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of HHS for Public Affairs. This position carries significant responsibility. It's a serious job to manage the Department's public face and translate its policy into digestible messages for the American people.

Americans respect and believe information transmitted by the Secretary. I expect Ms. Pearson to be accurate and factual. I expect her to put politics aside in the conduct of her job. Americans deserve the real deal, not information twisted for political gain. Our nation's health and wellness depend upon it.

Mr. Millard is the first nominee for PBGC Director subject to Senate confirmation. Last year, in enacting the Pension Protection Act, we upgraded the position to a Presidential appointment subject to Senate confirmation, and made it one of the few positions in government subject to confirmation by two committees — Finance and HELP.

The position's new status reflects how important we consider the person responsible for making sure that our workers receive their pensions. And it reflects the great concern by both Committees about the financial health of the PBGC and the defined benefit pension system.

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